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**GOVERNORS PROPOSED BUDGET  
PUBLIC HEARING 3/23/2011**

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**FROM: CONNECTICUT TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION**  
**DATE: FEBRUARY 23, 2011**

**RE: OPPOSED TO THE NEAR ELIMINATION OF FUNDING FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES  
PROVIDED BY THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION  
PAGE 217 – GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET**

I am Frank A. Bailey, a resident of Orange and a partner in the law firm of Tremont & Sheldon in Bridgeport. Our firm represents injured workers. I have been active in the field of workers' compensation for over twenty years and have worked in this area on behalf of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association.

I realize that these are difficult financial times which require shared sacrifice. I ask that you consider the fact that the Worker's Compensation Commission has had reduced budgets for a number of years and that you provide it with adequate funding to do its job. One of its jobs is to provide training to those injured workers who cannot return to their former work due to their injuries.

I am here to testify about the proposal in the Governors' budget to severely limit funding for the Rehabilitation Services Program (Vocational Rehabilitation). Very often, an injured worker is unable to return to their former employment due to their injury and their physical limitations. Employers are not required to rehire or retrain injured workers. Through the Rehabilitation Services Program, these workers are able to obtain training in a new field so that they can become a productive part of the economy. In addition to job training, the program provides assistance with job placement and vocational counseling. This program is limited to workers who have permanent injuries that disable them from performing their customary or most recent work. In order to be eligible for the program, a claimant must provide evidence of a permanent limitation which prevents him from performing his pre-injury occupation.

The Rehabilitation Services Program is a valuable service whose purpose is consistent with the Governor's goal of job creation. It helps enable our job force to compete in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy. Most importantly, without such a program, injured workers may be left with no alternative to unemployment.

Over the years I have had many clients who could not return to their former jobs due to the physical limitations of their injuries. Through Vocational Rehabilitation, they have been able to become trained in non-physical occupations, such as computer programming, electronics or data entry. Upon the completion of their training, they have found employment.

Vocational Rehabilitation is a valuable program that deserves your support.

Thank you